

**July 27, 2009**

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – Today, U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) is introducing legislation that will help make America's roads safer for older drivers. The Older Driver and Pedestrian Safety and Roadway Enhancement Act of 2009 would invest \$500 million annually in making improvements to our nation's infrastructure and road signs to better accommodate older drivers' and pedestrians' needs and improve traffic safety for all roadway users.

**"It is estimated that by 2025, one in four drivers will be 65 or older," Altmire said. "Given this fact, we need to make sure we are taking older drivers' needs into account in our transportation planning. By making improvements that will make roadway hazards more visible and signs easier to read, we can make our roads safer for drivers of all ages."**

Recent studies have identified several roadway improvements that could be made to better accommodate older drivers' needs. These improvements include creating more left turn lanes with left turn signals; creating bike lanes; and improving roadway signs by ensuring they are not clustered together, have larger fonts and are easily readable, even in low light.

Altmire's legislation would provide \$500 million annually to help states make these types of improvements. Because western Pennsylvania has a high percentage of older drivers, it is likely that our region would receive a significant amount of funding for these life-saving transportation improvements.

**"Congressman Altmire deserves credit not only for introducing this bill, but also for having the foresight to recognize that making roads safer for older drivers will make them safer for everyone," David Certner, AARP's Legislative Policy Director, said. "Older drivers and teen drivers, their passengers and those who care about them will benefit from investing in safer roads that meet improved standards. As Congress considers updating America's transportation system, we urge them to also choose to put people and their safety first."**

Altmire's bill would also establish a position within the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) that is dedicated to ensuring older drivers' needs are being taken into account. A recent report from AARP's Public Policy Institute found that two-thirds of transportation planners and engineers have yet to begin addressing the needs of older Americans in their street planning, despite the fact that by 2025, 64 million Americans will be over the age of 65.